

REMARKS

By this response independent Claim 1 has been amended to require that a probe for detecting or irradiating near-field light comprises a cantilever having a hollow tip at its free end made of a different material than the material of the cantilever. As is made clear from the Specification, the claimed groove in the cantilever comprises a hollow waveguide which provides a space continuous with the hollow tip, and the material of the waveguide can prevent the absorption of light. The Specification discloses this requirement regarding the material of the hollow tip at Page 18, line 9 through Page 20, line 21. This structure as claimed by Applicants allows for selection of a material for the tip in order to provide for a low transmission loss as referred to at Page 9, lines 14-18 of the Specification.

Applicants respectfully submit that the cited Muramatsu patent does not disclose a hollow waveguide as set forth in the amended Claim 1. Furthermore, the probe 2a of Muramatsu is formed from the same material as the lever portion 70 thereof, thus demonstrating another distinction of Claim 1 as compared to the cited Muramatsu patent.

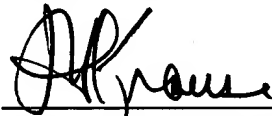
Similarly, the cited Brezoczky patent does not disclose or suggest a probe for near-field light. Instead, Brezoczky is based on the assumption that the optical slider 51 contacts the optical disk 53, wherefore the slider 51 and support arm 49 of Brezoczky cannot be deemed to be analogous to the present invention.

Finally, the cited Quate and Ueyanagi patents do not disclose hollow waveguides and cannot be deemed to overcome the deficiencies of the Muramatsu and Brezoczky patents as prior art.

For all of these various reasons it is believed that amended independent Claim 1 and all of its dependent claims are allowable. Accordingly, the issuance of a formal Notice of Allowance is solicited.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our New York Office by telephone at (212) 218-2100. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our address listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



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